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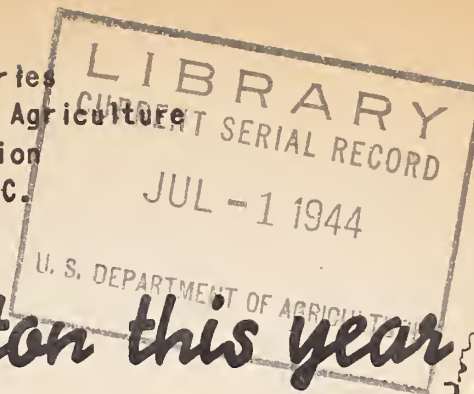
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# Make the Grade in Cotton this year



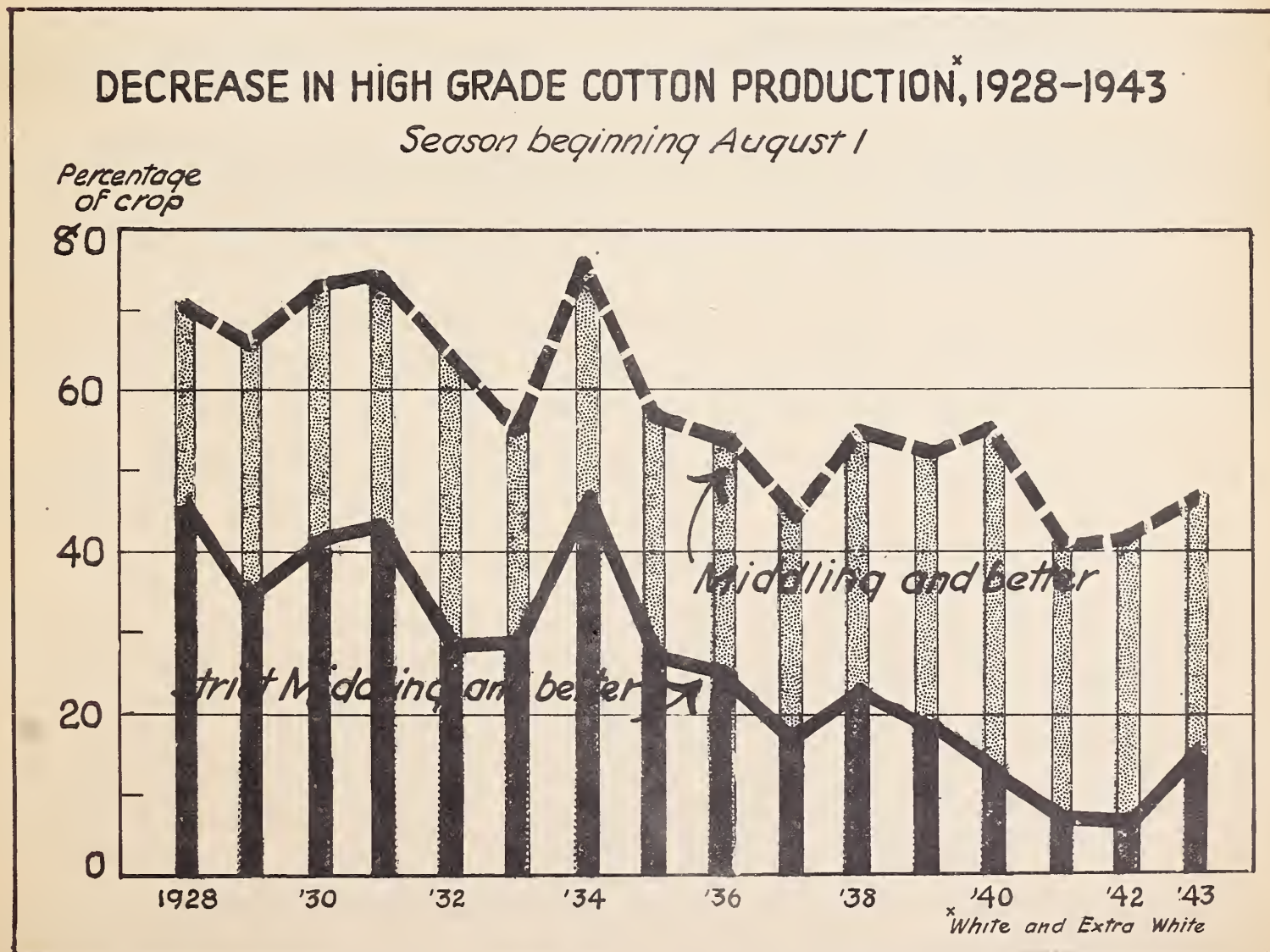
A program and background fact sheet for explaining the need for and methods of producing high grade cotton.

The war requires a large amount of high grade cotton

There has been a big decrease in the higher cotton grades

Farmers get a premium for high grade cotton

The grade of our cotton will be important in post-war trade



Because of these facts the U. S. Department of Agriculture, National Cotton Council, and State extension services, encouraged by the War Department, are cooperating in an educational program to urge picking, handling, and ginning the 1944 cotton crop in such a way that a higher percentage of the better grades will be produced.

Such a program last year heightened farmers' interest in growing higher grade cotton and, along with good weather, contributed to doubling the percentage of the crop grading Strict Middling or better compared with the year before.

This program is important because cotton is still the world's most important fiber crop, the South's main money crop, and one of this country's long-time export crops.

The quality of cotton is determined largely by its staple length and grade. The staple length is determined largely by the variety planted. The grade is determined largely by the way insects are controlled and the way the crop is handled at harvest time in picking, ginning, and storage. Hence this picking-time effort to increase the grade of cotton should not be confused with other programs at planting time to grow longer staple varieties, organize one-variety cotton communities, etc.

Objective of the program will be to use every possible educational device to urge farmers and pickers to -

1. Pick cotton as dry as possible
2. Keep trash out
3. Pick before weather damage
4. Keep good cotton separate, and to urge ginners to adopt the latest ginning methods which protect the cotton grade

Two basic copy themes that are being used in the national materials and that can well be used in local efforts are:

"High Grade Cotton Means More Supplies For War - More Money For You" and "Make the Grade This Year."

Available Materials: Regionally, the need for and means of producing high grade cotton will be stressed in releases and mats to the press; fact sheets to farm radio program directors and farm magazine editors; spot announcements to radio stations, and a poster "Produce High Grade Cotton," which will be sent direct to all ginners.

Most State extension services have or are printing up-to-date subject-matter leaflets explaining what makes cotton grade and how to produce high grade cotton. Several of the States are printing simple cartoon leaflets for cotton pickers and farmers showing the need for high grade cotton and high-lighting the points of this campaign.

Some Local Suggestions: There are many ways that county extension agents, farmer committeemen, newspapers, radio stations, farm magazines, ginmen, farm and civic organizations, and others can locally carry out the program. They can display the national poster. They can arrange for farmers who are growing high grade cotton to tell how and what it means. A general understanding of why we need high grade cotton and the premium local markets are paying for the higher grades, as well as distribution of State leaflets and circular letters to farmers--all have a part in the program in each cotton county. Although the county agricultural extension agent is responsible for the educational program locally, all agencies and groups can help.

Timing the Effort: The program in each region should reach its height just before and during cotton picking time. Except in the extreme southern regions, the cotton harvest begins during early September. September, October, and November are the heavy harvest months, though cotton picking begins in the extreme South in early July and is well under way in many localities by late August.

## SOME BACKGROUND FACTS

During the 1928-29 season slightly more than 47 percent of the cotton produced in the United States was Strict Middling and better (White and Extra White). Since then the proportion of such grades has dropped steadily except in the 1934-35 season when it returned almost to the 1928-29 level. During the 1942-43 season it fell to slightly more than 7 percent of the total production. Preliminary reports on the 1943-44 crop indicate that it will be a little more than 15 percent, which is almost double that of the previous crop year.

The carry-over of upland Strict Middling and higher grade cotton at the beginning of the 1943 season was 809,000 bales compared with slightly more than 3 million bales of Middling, 3 3/4 million bales of Strict Low Middling, and about 2 4/5 million bales of Low Middling and lower.

Production: In 1943 there was only about 1 2/3 million bales of Upland Strict Middling and higher produced, as compared with almost 4 million bales of Middling, slightly more than 4 million bales of Strict Low Middling, and 1 1/3 million bales of Low Middling and lower.

The supply of upland cotton in the United States in 1943 of Strict Middling and higher grades was nearly 2 1/2 million bales. There was about 3 times that much Middling, about 3 1/4 times as much Strict Low Middling, and nearly twice as much Low Middling and lower.

These figures literally tell the story. Something must be done to improve the grade. High grade cotton is needed instead of the low grade which we are piling up year by year. Present indications are that we will carry into next season nearly 2 years' requirements of low grades, Low Middling and lower.

War Uses: Approximately 11,000 different items made of cotton are used by our Army and Navy. Cotton is used for gun camouflage and shelters, truck tarpaulins, munitions, all types of uniforms including ski and air suits, blankets, sleeping bags, parachutes for dropping supplies by air, tents, cord in tires for military vehicles, hammocks, fishing nets, helmet linings, plane parts, self-sealing gasoline tanks for planes, life rafts, and the like.

A major part of the total cotton production in this country is being used currently to equip our fighting man.

Although some low grade cotton is used by our military forces, most of the articles mentioned require a high grade. As the figures on production, supply, and carry-over indicate, we are producing more cotton than is needed in grades below Middling. The job at hand is to build up our Middling and higher production.

The planting of a long staple variety does not necessarily mean that a good grade will be produced. A long staple, however, and a high grade result in high quality cotton which meets the most exacting military requirements. Even farmers who organize into cotton improvement groups and plant the good varieties of cotton most suitable to their localities must understand the importance of proper harvesting, handling, and ginning to insure a high quality.

Importance of Cotton: About 73 percent of the raw fibers consumed by this Nation during the past year was cotton. There are about 2 million farms producing the crop annually, and in any single year a great variation is found in the quality of production. Soils, rainfall, temperatures, varieties planted, tillage methods, insect damage, harvesting, handling, and ginning methods vary. Although some of these factors are beyond the control of the individual producer, in most cases he can do much toward contributing to higher grades by following the four suggested steps.

The principal physical properties and characteristics of cotton which affect its quality, insofar as grade alone is concerned, are color, leaf and other foreign matter, and ginning

preparation. Other physical properties or characteristics are staple length, uniformity or evenness of length, fineness, strength, and maturity. In general, the more desirable a cotton is from the standpoint of the use that can be made of it, the higher its quality is said to be; and the less useful a cotton is, the lower its quality. Therefore, the classification of cotton is built upon the principle of relative usefulness.

Factors of Grade: Cotton at the beginning of the season usually is of high grade, since it is bright in color and carries no great amount of leaf. If cotton is picked after frost, it may be tinged or stained yellow; and if picked and ginned with cotton which opened normally before frost, spotted or low grade cotton results. Insects also cause spots. In areas where cotton is grown on red soil, bolls often fall to the ground and are soil-stained. Cotton left in the field after opening becomes darker and dull in color as a result of weather exposure; therefore is also lower in grade.

Foreign matter, which includes dried and broken plant foliage of various kinds, motes, seed-coat, fragments, and sometimes sand and dust, also lower the grade. Thus, the less foreign matter, the higher the grade. This is of great concern especially to the spinner since there is much less waste to cotton with little or no foreign matter.

Preparation of cotton is a term used to describe the degree of smoothness or relative nappiness of the ginned lint. Seed cotton when ginned damp or wet results in roughly ginned lint, thereby lowering its value one or more grades.

Price Difference in Grades: The difference in the price of high grade cotton and low grade is too great to escape the notice of the producer. Here are the facts which surely will impress him:

The 10-market average price for Middling 15/16 inch cotton in 1943 (August through March) was 20.33 cents per pound. Strict Middling was 20.63 cents or the Middling 15/16 inch price plus a premium of 30 points. For Good Ordinary, the lowest of white grades, the price averaged 14.21 cents or a discount from Middling of 6.12 points. Thus, on a per-bale basis, Strict Middling was worth about \$32 more than Good Ordinary.

This difference in premium, plus the need for higher grade cotton, should be enough to make every cotton producer, picker, and ginner quality-conscious.